

## The Morality of Musical Men: From Victorian Propriety to the Era of #MeToo

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**Trigger warning:** This paper contains references to sexual abuse and descriptions of child abuse.

In an interview last November for Boston Public Radio, music director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra Andris Nelsons was asked whether sexual harassment is or has ever been an issue among classical musicians. He responded unequivocally, “No.”<sup>1</sup> He explained that, “If [people] could realize how important [music and art] are...I believe they would become better human beings.”<sup>2</sup> Nelsons was responding to a question about the recent spike in use of the #MeToo hashtag, in which women (mostly) detailed incidences of sexual harassment and/or abuse, some of which took place within the classical music world. Nelsons’s comment proved *spectacularly* tone-deaf, as well as ill-timed: Less than two weeks later, the *New York Times* broke the story of Metropolitan Opera conductor James Levine’s alleged sexual abuse of teenagers.<sup>3</sup> Accusations toward another world-famous conductor, Charles Dutoit, became public a few weeks later.<sup>4</sup>

The idea that music—specifically Western classical music—and other fine arts have the power to enrich and ennoble people has existed for generations, and it implies the following corollary: that one who produces such powerful art must possess great spiritual or moral qualities. Since the time of Beethoven, people have been willing to overlook his destructive tendencies to proclaim him a great soul. While this conjunction of music and morals has persisted for well over a century, these two ideas have not *always* been linked in the way which we’re familiar.

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Shanahan, “BSO’s Andris Nelsons says sexual harassment isn’t a problem in classical music,” *The Boston Globe*, November 20, 2017, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/lifestyle/names/2017/11/20/bsa-andris-nelsons-says-sexual-harassment-isn-problem-classical-music/RS4BiGKOcT4nLUWP9szsGP/story.html>.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Michael Cooper, “Met Opera Suspends James Levine After New Sexual Abuse Accusations,” *The New York Times*, December 3, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/03/arts/music/james-levine-met-opera.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Dakin Andone, Konstantin Toropin and AnneClaire Stapleton, “Famous conductor Charles Dutoit accused of sexual misconduct,” *CNN.com*, December 23, 2017, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/12/21/us/charles-dutoit-sexual-misconduct-allegations>.

In this talk, I will take us back in time to the nineteenth century, to the intellectual *milieu* that linked music and personal morals, demonstrating how both the moral *values* and the type of music connected to them *both* encapsulate the era in which they converged. From there, I show the effects of this linkage through the twentieth century, how composer biographies were distorted and sanitized in order to present composers as worthy role models—not just musically, but in their personal conduct. Finally, I come back to the present day to show how conflating classical music and the people who make it has led to abuses of power.

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Though today we go to “classical” concerts expecting to hear at least *some* works by the Great Composers of the Canon (Bach, Beethoven, Brahms; Handel, Haydn, Mozart; and so on), at the beginning of the nineteenth century, this rigidity of concert programming was not the norm. First of all, concert performances were much longer, allowing the performance of more works. For example, Beethoven’s fifth and sixth symphonies premiered on a concert that lasted about four hours, which also included his fourth piano concerto, an aria, and his *Fantasia for Piano, Orchestra and Chorus*—by today’s standards, an inconceivable program!<sup>5</sup> Audiences of the time distinctly preferred hearing new music, privileging novelty—the fact that we have entire concerts without a single living composer would puzzle them. Another radical difference is that there was a much wider variety of music heard in what are appropriately deemed “miscellany” concerts—an aria followed by an orchestral overture, then a piano sonata, and so on.<sup>6</sup> The miscellany also featured a mixture of musical styles—“high” genres such as symphonies coexisting with “low” genres like popular ballads—all sharing the same audience.

That inclusive attitude was about to disappear, to be replaced by a concert culture that more resembles our own. As William Weber pointed out in his book *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste* (published in 2008), several simultaneous changes affected audiences in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup> The Romantic fad of antiquarianism manifested in an increased interest in music of the past—not just as objects of study, but as works that should continue to be performed. As for *which* works were worthy of revival, influential members of the music scene,

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<sup>5</sup> Barry Cooper, *Beethoven* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 193.

<sup>6</sup> William Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 235–6.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

such as music directors like Felix Mendelssohn, promoted the composers of what was just then becoming known as the “Classical” era: Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, eventually stretching back to include works by Handel and Bach. While living composers continued to produce new music, their works became crowded out by those of the acknowledged Masters, thus strengthening the association of “high” art music with a specific set of “old” music.

Another phenomenon that affected audiences in this period was a growing belief that a person had to “understand” music in order to fully appreciate the musical experience.<sup>8</sup> Thus, they had to educate themselves about what they were hearing—and the proper way to respond to such rarified sounds. These expectations led to a boom in music history books throughout Europe and America, a trend that produced François-Joseph Fétis’s *La musique mise à la portée de tout le monde* (of 1830), Emil Naumann’s *Illustrierte Musikgeschichte* (between 1880 and 1885), and Sir Charles Hubert Hastings Parry’s *The Art of Music* (of 1893). The same impulse of audience education also produced the first edition of Sir George Grove’s illustrious *Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (published in four volumes between 1879 and 1890). Grove notes the increased interest in musical knowledge, writing in the preface,

This work is intended to supply a great and long acknowledged want. A growing demand has arisen...for information on all matters directly and indirectly connected with Music, owing to the great spread of concerts, musical publications, private practice, and interest in the subject, and to the immense improvement in the general position of music which has taken place since the commencement of the present century.<sup>9</sup>

(Keep in mind that the “present century” for Grove would have been the nineteenth.) Such books were part of a concerted effort to educate music-lovers (professional and amateur) on the music they were listening to, thereby encouraging the development of musical taste.

One major difference between these music history books and the books on music produced in the eighteenth century is the focus on individual people. Earlier books, influenced by Enlightenment ideals, tended to investigate the science of music, often putting ancient Greek ideas of harmony and proportion to the test to explain how music worked. Even the history

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> George Grove, “Preface,” in *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. George Grove (London: MacMillan and Co., 1880), i.

books, like Charles Burney's *A General History of Music* (of 1789), tend to be catalogs of what's out there. In the nineteenth century, roughly speaking, the spirit of Romanticism encouraged historians to think of events in terms of exceptional individuals; in music, this led to histories that emphasized composers.

The connection between music and human behavior had long been part of Western culture; Plato's *Republic* includes a discussion of how different modes influence people to feel and act certain ways.<sup>10</sup> In the nineteenth century, however, music was seen less as a universal science and more as an art that operates on the level of the individual. A person's reaction to music revealed more about the listener than about the music. Though many writers in the Victorian era touted the connection between refined musical taste and high moral bearing, few make their case stronger than Reverend Hugh Reginald Haweis (born 1838, died 1901). His book, *Music and Morals*, was first published in 1871 and went through nineteen editions in his lifetime—a testament to the high interest in its subject matter and the popularity of this text. Haweis was himself a cleric in the Church of England, but he was also an amateur musician and wrote several books on the subject. In *Music and Morals*, he details how art can itself be moral: “The Morality depends upon the Artist, not upon the Art. If a man is a good man, the tendency of his work will probably be moral; and if a bad man, it will most likely be the reverse; but you may have a work of Art at one and the same time aesthetically good and morally bad.”<sup>11</sup> Here, Haweis conjectures that a work may be pleasing and good, yet morally unsound. Even so, the morality of the work is contingent upon the person (let's face it, *man*) who made it.

When Haweis goes on to discuss the makers of music, he lauds, “The Composer lives in a world apart, into which only those who have the golden key are admitted.”<sup>12</sup> Here, the composer as a person is distinguished from the rest of humanity. He justifies his preference for German composers by saying, “German music has probed the humanities and sounded the depths of our nature—taught us how to bring the emotional region not only into the highest activity, but also under the highest control.”<sup>13</sup> It is important to note that, although Haweis values emotion, he places even more value on restraint. This is one way in which Victorian values differ from

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<sup>10</sup> Plato, *Republic*, trans. Benjamin Jowett, <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.4.iii.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Hugh Reginald Haweis, *Music and Morals* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1872), 44.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

*Romantic* ones—rather than privileging overwhelming passion, Victorians such as Haweis believe that restraint of such passion displays morality. In praising the German school of music, Haweis lists composers that make up the nascent canon: “Gluck, Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Spohr, Mendelssohn, and Schumann.”<sup>14</sup> Spohr is included in this list, even though he’s rarely mentioned today—the musical canon is not fixed in stone!

Haweis then briefly describes the best qualities of the composers’ personalities, providing more information on what qualities he deems “moral.” As I read these descriptions, I invite you to compare what Haweis writes to how *you* think of the composer:

- “Of dear old Sebastian **Bach**...let us merely say that he was a good husband, father and friend; in the words of his friend Kittell, ‘he was an excellent man.’”<sup>15</sup>
- **Haydn**: “He was a man without ambition and without jealousy, simply devoted to his art, quite uncovetous, and, until comparatively late in life, equally unconscious of his own immense merit and widespread fame.”<sup>16</sup>
- “**Mozart**...was a man of the most singularly well-balanced character. His natural dispositions seemed all good, his affectional instincts all healthy, and his religious life earnest and practical.”<sup>17</sup>
- “**Beethoven**, born at Bonn, 1770, was equally great in his intellect and his affections....There is no stain upon his life. His integrity was spotless; his purity unblemished; his generosity boundless; his affections deep and lasting; his piety simple and sincere.”<sup>18</sup>

Although these descriptions are so vague as to be difficult to “debunk,” in many cases one can produce examples that contradict Haweis’s high-minded presentations. Could Haweis’s “all good” Mozart have possessed the puerile, vulgar humor that produced “Leck mich im Arsch”?<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 83-4.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>19</sup> Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, “*Leck mich im Arsch*,” Canon in B flat for 6 Voices, K. 231 / K. 382c, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leck\\_mich\\_im\\_Arsch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leck_mich_im_Arsch).

Was Beethoven's integrity "spotless" when he forbade his nephew Karl from seeing his mother?<sup>20</sup>

Haweis further observes, "It is...noteworthy that so many great composers have been men whose emotions were so severely disciplined, and whose lives were so well regulated, that they stand out as examples not only of steady and indefatigable workers, but also of high minded moral and even religious men."<sup>21</sup> A little further on, Haweis clarifies that the act of composition itself helped these men become moral giants:

"His profession, rightly exercised, does not lead to the unbalanced excitement of sensuous emotions, which is certainly highly prejudicial to both moral and physical health, but to the orderly education and discipline of emotion, which is a very different thing. This consideration may help to explain...the settled principle and moral impulse...of so many great composers."<sup>22</sup>

Haweis's composers share the values of sociability, earnest religion, devotion to art, and control over emotion. He even considers these qualities to be endemic to the profession. Yet all these values are coded as "masculine" in Victorian culture. In Haweis's society, men demonstrate their moral bearing by restraining their emotions; they exercise mastery over their extreme passion. Women in this worldview, on the other hand, are too easily swayed by mere sentimentality. Hence composition and masculinity are also intertwined.

Haweis was far from the only person who believed in the ennobling power of music, but I have chosen these quotes because they vividly and succinctly demonstrate how biographies became hagiographies in the nineteenth century. There is a reason we use the religious term "canon" when speaking of these men—they have been venerated as saints of music. The actual history of these flawed human beings often got sanitized; their sins were beyond pardoned—they were erased. This trend of sanctifying composers was not confined to the Victorian era, as I shall demonstrate with a series of composer biographies from the mid-twentieth century. Again, these

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<sup>20</sup> Lewis Lockwood, *Beethoven: The Music and the Life* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 355.

<sup>21</sup> Haweis, 81.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

books are far from the only books of their era that exhibit the features I highlight, but I selected them for how vividly they display these traits.

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Moving now into the twentieth century, the books of the Great Musicians Series were written by Opal Wheeler (with some books co-authored by Sybil Deucher) from 1936 to 1960. They are aimed specifically at children so that they may be introduced to the “most memorable and timeless musical pieces” of the past and learn about the composers’ lives—at least, the acceptable aspects of them.<sup>23</sup> These didactic books still exhibit the values that converged in the previous century: The works mentioned in the series are part of an eternal canon of high art; they state that education is necessary for the proper appreciation of this body of music; and they imply that learning composers’ biographies is fundamental to understanding the music itself. Less obviously, the books seem to tacitly agree with Haweis’s premise that music has a moral component that is determined by the work’s composer.

Another similarity between Haweis and Wheeler’s consideration of composers is that they present composers as endowed with remarkable moral senses, ignoring (or outright misrepresenting!) evidence to the contrary. One difference is that Wheeler’s series, aimed at children, emphasizes composers’ childhoods. Clearly, Wheeler wants the child reader to identify with the Great Musician and see him as a role model, and certain topics would not be considered appropriate for children: Chopin’s affair with George Sand, Beethoven’s abusive childhood, Schumann’s mental collapse, and so on. Although omission of these unsavory details is understandable, Wheeler’s erasure of faults goes even further.

Wheeler’s *Ludwig Beethoven and the Chiming Tower Bells* (1944) tells how the composer’s father Johann was pleased that his son showed musical talent, and, in Wheeler’s words, “From then on, the four-year-old Ludwig was kept at the piano hour after hour until the long exercises were mastered. The chiming bells in the chapel tower comforted him and wonderful melodies crept into his mind as the twilight crept over the city.”<sup>24</sup> What this

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<sup>23</sup> “Great Musicians Series,” from Zeezok Publishing, [http://www.zeezok.com/Great-Musicians-Series\\_c\\_7.html](http://www.zeezok.com/Great-Musicians-Series_c_7.html).

<sup>24</sup> Opal Wheeler, *Ludwig Beethoven and the Chiming Tower Bells* (Elyria, OH: Zeezok Publishing, LLC, 2010), text quoted on the back cover.

description glosses over is his alcoholic father's beatings to keep Ludwig at the piano, and that the reason he was up so late is that his father would force Ludwig out of bed to entertain his friends.<sup>25</sup> The book also claims that Beethoven studied with Mozart, although these composers *may* have met (and that in itself may be apocryphal), they did not have the teacher-student relationship implied by Wheeler. Yet such a linkage solidifies both composers' presence in the canon (as though these two would need any help!).

Some of the stories are misleading—the back cover of *Sebastian Bach, The Boy from Thuringia* informs the reader that Wheeler and Deucher include “how he helped his wife Magdalena put the twenty children to bed every night.”<sup>26</sup> As I point out my blog post about these books, there are at least two problems with this idea: first, although Bach had twenty children, they were never all alive at the same time. Also, three of those children died before Anna Magdalena could become their stepmother.<sup>27</sup> So, there was no way that Mr. and Mrs. Bach ever put twenty children to bed. But this erroneous detail reinforces the image of Bach as a devoted family man, one of the values also praised by Haweis.

The books present composers as spirited children who reveal their extreme musical talents early on. Some of the series' titles display a touch of whimsy: *Joseph Haydn, The Merry Little Peasant*; *Mozart, The Wonder Boy*; *Robert Schumann and Mascot Ziff*; *Adventures of Richard Wagner* (with an image of young Wagner that might suggest Jake Lloyd as young Anakin Skywalker).<sup>28</sup> The cover of *The Young Brahms* shows Johannes cutting a rug with an organ grinder's monkey.<sup>29</sup> Even some episodes from the composers' adult lives are fanciful; *Franz Schubert and His Merry Friends* claims that the composer never completed his Unfinished

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<sup>25</sup> Joe Meerdter, “Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827),” <http://www.midiworld.com/beethoven1.htm>. (I'd cite Lockwood, but I am unable to consult for a page number at this time.)

<sup>26</sup> Wheeler and Sybil Deucher, *Sebastian Bach, The Boy from Thuringia* (Elyria, OH: Zeezok Publishing, LLC, 2010), back cover description available at <https://www.amazon.com/Sebastian-Bach-Thuringia-Opal-Wheeler/dp/097465051X>.

<sup>27</sup> Linda Shaver-Gleason, “Did Bach raise 20 children? Writing composer biographies for kids,” on *Not Another Music History Cliché*, December 7, 2017, <https://notanothermusichistorycliche.blogspot.com/2017/12/did-bach-raise-20-children-writing.html>.

<sup>28</sup> Floyd Webb, Illustrator, *Adventures of Richard Wagner* by Opal Wheeler, (Elyria, OH: Zeezok Publishing, LLC, 2011), cover visible at [http://www.zeezok.com/Adventures-of-Richard-Wagner\\_p\\_129.html](http://www.zeezok.com/Adventures-of-Richard-Wagner_p_129.html).

<sup>29</sup> Edward and Stephanie Godwin, Illustrators, *The Young Brahms* by Sybil Deucher, (Elyria, OH: Zeezok Publishing, LLC, 2008), cover visible at [http://www.zeezok.com/The-Young-Brahms\\_p\\_144.html](http://www.zeezok.com/The-Young-Brahms_p_144.html).



Symphony because he was interrupted by his friends inviting him on a picnic!<sup>30</sup> One might forgive this lack of historical rigor in books for children, but Wheeler's books are used as substitutes for textbooks.<sup>31</sup>

Although Wheeler and Deucher stopped adding titles to the Great Musician Series in 1960, these books are still being published in the twenty-first century by Zeezok Publishing. Zeezok explicitly markets Wheeler's books to families who homeschool.<sup>32</sup> (Now, there are many different reasons for homeschooling with a variety of educational goals and methods, such that any comment I make about trends in homeschooling does not apply to everyone who homeschools.) Within American homeschooling tradition, there is an educational philosophy developed by Charlotte Mason that advocates teaching subjects through what she calls "living books" rather than textbooks.<sup>33</sup> The goal is that narrative approaches can make science and math more interesting, and histories with characters that are relatable make events more memorable. In writing about Wheeler's books for my own blog, I heard from people who had used the Great Musician series in their personal homeschool educations, many of which were religiously influenced. Wheeler's books align with the pedagogical aims of using "living books," particularly since the composers are presented as wholesome and eminently emulatable. The books' inaccuracies, however, concern me as a musicologist, particularly one who debunks myths. These fanciful details are precisely the type to stick in people's heads for decades, gaining the authority of "something I once read," which is *very* difficult to undermine.

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Before I return to today's scandals, I will take a moment here to unpack some of the concepts that link Haweis's *Music and Morals* to Wheeler's Great Musician Series, as well as to current attitudes in classical music. First, all of our examples emphasize individuals, invariably men. Furthermore, the composers are all presented as very powerful, possessing abilities beyond most people, even other musicians. They wield absolute authority over their music, bending the "executing musicians" to their will in the service of High Art. Finally, the human aspects of these

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<sup>30</sup> Wheeler, *Franz Schubert and His Merry Friends*, (Elyria, OH: Zeezok Publishing, LLC, 2008), back cover description available at <https://www.amazon.com/Franz-Schubert-His-Merry-Friends/dp/1933573139>.

<sup>31</sup> "Great Musicians Series," from Zeezok Publishing, [http://www.zeezok.com/Great-Musicians-Series\\_c\\_7.html](http://www.zeezok.com/Great-Musicians-Series_c_7.html).

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> "What is a living book?" *Simply Charlotte Mason.com*, <https://simplycharlottesmason.com/fag/livingbook/>.

composers—their moral failings, so to speak—are ignored or tacitly pardoned because of the power they wield.

It would be irresponsible of me to move from dead composers to living *conductors* without acknowledging the distinction. In classical music culture, we still treat the composer as paramount. However, given that the culture also privileges music of *dead* men, the *living* representatives highest on the hierarchy (at least, within public view) are the conductors. Like composers, they exercise control and power over a large body of musicians and are given credit for possessing a unique, all-encompassing understanding of musical works. And, as we shall see, their indiscretions may be overlooked by audiences who believe that those who heed the call of “great art” are to be judged according to different moral standards.

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Returning to the present issues, James Levine’s alleged abuse had long been considered an “open secret” in the classical music world, something that musicians warned each other about and that administrators knew to handle.<sup>34</sup> But without any evidence, complaints of Levine’s behavior were treated as rumors, perhaps spread by people envious of his talent and position. In 2001, *New Yorker* music critic Alex Ross dismissed the rumors:

They belong in the category of personalized urban legends that attach themselves to certain celebrities for no discernible reason. Creepier than the rumors themselves is the delight with which people in the music world have repeated them. Some have done so out of professional envy, some out of sheer malice. Levine has denied the rumors, but his most effective response has been his performances, which make all the gossip sound bitter and small.<sup>35</sup>

(I must point out that Ross has since stated his regret for making this statement, Tweeting, “At the time, I thought that Levine was being victimized by false rumors. I was disastrously wrong, and am ashamed to have written this.”<sup>36</sup>) That Ross had once considered Levine’s *performances*

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<sup>34</sup> Joe Dziemianowicz, Nicole Hensley, and Ross Keith, “Famed conductor James Levine under investigation by Met Opera over sexual abuse allegations,” *Daily News*, December 3, 2017, <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/met-opera-conductor-james-levine-accused-molesting-teenage-boy-article-1.3673344>.

<sup>35</sup> Alex Ross, “Metropolitan Lives,” *The New Yorker*, November 5, 2001.

<sup>36</sup> Ross, Twitter post, December 4, 2017, 7:12 AM, <https://twitter.com/alexrossmusic/status/937701099976327173?lang=en>.

as an appropriate response to accusations of impropriety is revealing; he places music and moral behavior on the same scale, contrasting the smallness of the motivation behind the rumors against the implied immensity of Levine's performances. (Again, I want to emphasize that Ross does NOT stand by this comment anymore.)

Yet even now, as alleged victims have come forward and decades-old police records have been made public, audience members are *still* defending Levine, using his contributions to classical music as his defense. In a letter to the editor of the *New York Times*, one reader wrote, "James Levine may be a sinner, but I am less shocked by his sins than by how we instantly throw overboard people who, in the course of their long careers, have made such immense contributions to the world of music and society."<sup>37</sup> Again, this person implies that Levine's musical achievements have bearing on public consideration of his "sins," a term loaded with religious and moral implications. Another reader wrote, "[Levine] is a musical genius and has created one of the greatest opera orchestras in the world. These facts are incontestable."<sup>38</sup> This letter writer treats genius as objectively determined rather than a matter of personal taste, as though musical merit is absolute and has any bearing on accusations of sexual abuse.

Of the five letters to the editors about Levine printed in the *New York Times* that day, only one was by a woman. Perhaps unsurprisingly, she was less willing to forgive Levine's alleged behavior, tying it to larger social movements on social media. She writes,

"For the #MeToo movement to be a cultural change and not just a social fad, we must recognize that nothing justifies adults having sex with non-adults, or powerful people harassing their prey. We must revoke the free passes that until just a few months ago we gave to those who are powerful, influential, creative, charismatic or 'brilliant.'"<sup>39</sup>

This reader recognizes that Levine's power (and that of Dutoit, and of Beethoven, Haydn, and so on) does not derive from Great Art, but from the *people*. It was people who turned the composers into superhumans, and people who placed morality and creative capacity within the same

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<sup>37</sup> William J. Dean, Letter to the Editor, "Artistic Genius and Sexual Misconduct," *The New York Times*, December 6, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/06/opinion/james-levine.html>.

<sup>38</sup> Robert Pearlstein, Letter to the Editor, "Artistic Genius and Sexual Misconduct," *The New York Times*, December 6, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/06/opinion/james-levine.html>.

<sup>39</sup> Karla Jennings, Letter to the Editor, "Artistic Genius and Sexual Misconduct," *The New York Times*, December 6, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/06/opinion/james-levine.html>.

dimension. It behooves us to remember that the “Power of the Arts,” however we interpret it or experience it, should not be conflated with the power that a person exerts over others.

Classical music enthusiasts in particular are susceptible to eroding the distinction between art and the people who create it. Unfortunately, some people exploit the presumed moral superiority of classical music to deflect from immoral behaviors. It is another “open secret” that classical music culture in the United States has been stuck in the nineteenth century, from mainstream preferences for repertoire, to the way concert etiquette still reflects assumptions of social class. Unfortunately, cultural artifacts—like the Great Master who has given himself over to Art—often clash with twenty-first century expectations of behavior. If classical music culture can be so threatened by the harmful actions of a few powerful people, that is an indication that it cannot remain so beholden to Romantic institutions.

**Thank you.**